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Governor Doyle Announces Hurricane Relief Partnership with U.S. Cellular

Company Will Provide 300 Phones to Katrina Evacuees at State Fair Park

Governor Jim Doyle today announced a hurricane relief partnership between the State of Wisconsin and U.S. Cellular that will provide 300 cellular phones to Hurricane Katrina evacuees located at State Fair Park. The product of the State reaching out to its corporate partners for relief assistance, the donation will provide evacuees with a means by which they can contact loved ones at no cost.

"The evacuees living at State Fair Park have traveled a long way and been through so much," Governor Doyle said. "This generous donation from U.S. Cellular will help them reconnect with their loved ones, and provide the peace of mind you can only get by hearing a voice on the other end of the line."

The public-private partnership arose when the State's Division of Enterprise Technology realized that even with the installation of 50 additional phone lines at State Fair Park for evacuee support, there still were not enough phones to meet demand. To correct this, the State began reaching out to its cellular providers for possible solutions.

"Getting additional phone lines to State Fair Park will make a big difference in people's morale and will help alleviate a lot of the worrying that goes along with being cut off from friends and family," Governor Doyle said.

Contacted by the State, U.S. Cellular immediately stepped forward and offered to help by donating enough phones for all the evacuees at State Fair Park.

"This is a national tragedy, and U.S. Cellular is honored to be able to do our part to help the State of Wisconsin support these brave people," said John E. Rooney, president and chief executive officer of U.S. Cellular. "Our hope is that this donation will give these evacuees back a means of communication they lost in the storm, and allow them to start putting their lives back together."

The first shipment of 50 phones arrived at State Fair Park Saturday. The remaining 250 phones will be delivered today. U.S. Cellular will provide the wireless handsets – equipped with voicemail, text messaging, and long distance service – at no cost to the evacuees or the State for 90 days.